

CBS FACE THE NATION

31 July 1983

SHACKNE: What is going to be the effect of the voting of the House to cut off all covert assistance to Nicaragua, and what will be the ability of the administration to maintain such assistance for the contras, the anti-Sandinistas, in view of that vote and in view of the fact that there is an appropriation that has to be made starting in October. KIRKPATRICK: You know, I'm really glad you mentioned that vote. I was hoping that would come up today because I think that it was a very important vote, and I think the most important aspects of it have not in fact been focused on by the media treatment of the vote. If you look at what the House of Representatives voted, they voted on something, an amendment which was submitted by the majority leader, Jim Wright of Texas, and as he himself pointed out, what the House did in that vote was formally for the first time ever, find in the most clear-cut terms that the government of Nicaragua was guilty of violating its promises to its people, that it was guilty of repressing freedom and pluralism in Nicaragua, that it was guilty of stifling the free press and free trade unions and private sector in Nicaragua, that it was guilty of providing arms and guerrillas and other support to overthrow the government of El Salvador, all of this for the first time ever, was formally subscribed to as the nature of the problem. Now the amendment also called on the president to go back to the OAS, as it were, to encourage the OAS to take action to cause the government of Nicaragua to fulfill its promises, which had been *birthday promises made to the people of Nicaragua and to the OAS. Now, in addition to that, it provides that for a period of about 30 days, the United States government should cease support for any covert activities, direct or indirect or whatever directed against the government of Nicaragua providing, that that should continue, you know, unless that after 30 days, there will be a finding that the government of Nicaragua is continuing in fact to support guerrilla activities in El Salvador. I think that it is very important that the, virtually all the Democrats in the House of Representatives have now formally agreed about the nature of the government of Nicaragua and the nature of its activities in the region, and now that we know what the problem is, we can get on with the discussion of what we ought best most effectively to do about it.

SHACKNE: I take that, I take that as putting the most favorable light on a vote that every administration official I've talked to said was the kind of outcome they did not want, and in essence, where the Congress seemed to be saying, the House seemed to be saying, stop paying money for this military, for this particular kind of military. KIRKPATRICK: But that isn't at all what the House said. I suggest that you should look at what the House said. I don't think many people have looked at what the House said, and I don't think many people have even listened to what the majority leader said, Jim Wright said, what is it that this amendment does. He was very fair about it.

SHACKNE: It cuts off funds. KIRKPATRICK: It cuts off funds, and it declares the government of Nicaragua, for a period of 30 days, and it declares the government of Nicaragua an outlaw of the region guilty of the repression of its own people and aggression against its neighbors.

SHACKNE: But, but, may I ask this question. What will the administration do, what can you do in view of this vote, and in view of the great problems in both sides of the Hill in continuing funds for this kind of pressure? And there are great pressures in the Hill against such continuation. Can you maintain such pressure? KIRKPATRICK: I think what we have to do is continue our conversations, of course, with the members of the Congress now that we've agreed about what the problem is, we have to continue our conversations about what we need to do about it. I think what the vote showed was, you know, was a great deal of division and a certain, a lot of uncertainty about what it is we ought to do about the problem confronting us in Nicaragua and Central America, but the most significant thing about it, I think, it does show we've now got a consensus of what the government of Nicaragua is, what it is doing to its own people in the region. That's really important.